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56.

Commissioner

The third paragraph of the draft letter at 55B about recruiting is rather tongue in cheek but I do not know how forthright you will wish to be in dealing with this Advisory Committee. The truth is, of course, that we are not yet prepared to recruit any coloured men, although the time may not be so far distant when we shall be unable to turn down well-qualified men who have been born and educated in this country.

At a press conference last year, the then Home Secretary, Mr R. A. Butler, in answer to a question, said that it had not yet been found necessary nor expedient to recruit coloured police officers.

The following press notice has been issued on a number of occasions and has also been used as the basis of answers to parliamentary questions:-

"The standard applied to prospective recruits for the Metropolitan Police is that a police officer shall be acceptable to the general public as a whole. Any person who is not likely to be so accepted is not enrolled and this applies to white people as well as coloured. It is felt that the British public is not yet ready to accept coloured police officers, who would be unable to carry out the normal but difficult duties of a policeman unobtrusively and without comment. In a predominantly white population, coloured police officers would be at a serious disadvantage and it would be unreasonable to expect them to perform the specialised duties of a policeman efficiently."

We receive very few applications from West Indians: about 10 in the last twelve months which can be identified. Most were rejected on medical or educational grounds. The remainder were quite satisfied to withdraw when the difficulties were pointed out to them. It is our belief in Recruiting Branch that the West Indians and other coloured people are well aware that we do not recruit coloured men but that an occasional one is encouraged to apply by various societies as a kind of sighting shot.